Public Health Research in Palliative Care: Towards Solutions for Global Challenges

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An international audience of 122 delegates attended the 'Public Health Research in Palliative Care: Towards Solutions for Global Challenges' seminar hosted online by All-Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIIHPC) on November 17 and 18, 2020. This was the second International Research Seminar of the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) Research Network and EAPC Reference Group on Public Health and Palliative Care. This major international event included live presentations from leading researchers in the area of public health and palliative care including from the island of Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Australia, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Event organisation was overseen by a scientific committee which included leading researchers from public health and palliative care. The seminar was supported by the Irish Hospice Foundation. The scientific committee is pleased that seminar abstracts accepted are being published in the journal *Palliative Care and Social Practice*. Abstracts were invited over a range of topics including: public health palliative care and the response to COVID-19, compassionate communities, caregiving and bereavement, health promotion and palliative care, population health models for palliative care, and issues of equity.

Professor Joanne Reid, Queen's University, Belfast, and Chair of EAPC Public Health 2020 International Seminar Scientific Committee

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Abstract 22

The Impact of Poverty on End of Life and Bereavement Experiences: Lived Experience of Bereaved Individuals and Professionals Working in Low-Income Communities in the United Kingdom

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Background: Research shows that people living with severe economic disadvantage are less likely to access palliative care services in the United Kingdom and that funeral poverty is growing. However, little is understood about the ways in which the structural, social, and economic aspects of poverty impact upon preparing for end of life, and experiences of dying and bereavement. While public health approaches to palliative care and 'death awareness' initiatives encourage wider acceptance of the need to prepare for end of life, there is a need to examine the relevance of these approaches to people struggling to live well.

Aims: This study examines the notion of 'a good death' within low-income communities, and the ways in which poverty affects attitudes towards, and experiences of, death and dying.

Methods: Taking a qualitative and engaged approach, exploratory workshops were held bringing together health care professionals, voluntary organisations, and community groups to share existing knowledge and identify research priorities. Qualitative interviews were then carried out with 10 professionals supporting individuals through end-of-life and bereavement in low-income communities (e.g. funeral directors, faith leaders, advice workers) and 10 bereaved individuals with experience of funeral poverty. Interviews were conducted via phone/video call and data include experiences of end of life and bereavement both before and during the pandemic.

Results: This article will present early findings and provide evidence of the impact of poverty on experiences of death and dying at different stages of the life course; including concerns around preparing for death, experiences of end of life, and bereavement.

Discussion: This paper will consider whether some public health approaches to palliative care might inadvertently increase inequalities in access to care and support, and whether specific approaches may be needed to address the concerns of people on a low income in relation to a 'good death'.

Keywords: Poverty, end of life, public health, palliative care, death awareness, community

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